

# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, December 30, 1993

Published Since 1877

## First deaf missionary heard the Lord's call loud and clear

By Mary E. Speidel

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Yvette Aarons heard God's call in the sounds of silence.

Her response made history: On Dec. 7 she became the first deaf person appointed as a career missionary by the Foreign Mission Board. She'll return to the Caribbean island of Trinidad, where she has ministered to the deaf as a mission volunteer for three years.

"I've found my niche," said Aarons, 34, who has been deaf since birth.

Aarons grew up in Jamaica attending schools that emphasized "oral education," or teaching the deaf to speak and read lips. She learned to sign through her deaf friends.

She became a Christian as a teenager at a hearing church on the island. Later she began attending a deaf church, where she first sensed God's call to missions after meeting some evangelical missionaries.

Aarons moved with her family to New York City when she was 16. Her first exposure to Southern Baptists came when she started attending a Long Island church of the deaf during college. Leslie Bunn, then the church's assistant pastor, became an important mentor for her. He now leads the deaf congregation at Temple Church in Norfolk, Va.

"Communication is the biggest struggle of any deaf person," said Bunn following Aarons' appointment in Richmond. "But Yvette persevered. And I think the reason

she persevered is because she has a very close relationship with the Lord."

Aarons received the bachelor of arts degree from Long Island University in Brooklyn, N.Y., and master of education degree from Western Maryland College in Westminster, where she majored in deaf education.

After completing her education, she taught deaf, mentally retarded, and physically handicapped children in New York City for about a year.

With her goal of foreign missions in mind, Aarons moved to Fort Worth, Texas, to attend Southwestern Seminary. Her first year was tough; she had no interpreter for classes. But she survived by reading lips and borrowing notes from students she enlisted to help her.

"I knew this was where God wanted me. I just stuck with it through thick and thin," said Aarons, speaking through interpreter Becky Walker of Richmond, who interpreted for her during her later seminary years.

More hurdles awaited. When she contacted the Foreign Mission Board about possible service, board officials told her they had no personnel requests for a deaf person to work as a career missionary.

"The board didn't have a policy (against appointing the deaf), but it was seen in practical application as a problem. We didn't know how it would work," said FMB administrator Clark Scanlon, who has led

the board in studying deaf ministries around the world. "The main thing was that there was no request."

But Aarons didn't let that stop her. "I said, 'Well, I didn't make myself deaf,'" she recalled.

Then the Foreign Mission Board offered her an assignment as an International Service Corps volunteer among the deaf in Trinidad. Aarons spent three years there.

"She's been a wonderful inspiration to the deaf — for them to see a deaf young person who can live on her own, handle her own business affairs, and carry herself in a mature Christian manner," said FMB volunteer Lisa Bruce, who worked with Aarons in Trinidad for several months.

Besides sharing her faith and discipling new Christians, Aarons has tried to help Trinidadian deaf people build self-esteem and improve their lives.

Aarons' appointment is a "major, major step" for the Southern Baptist deaf community, said Carter Bearden, pastor to the deaf at First Church, Richmond, who interpreted for deaf worshippers attending the Dec. 7 missionary appointment service.

"It's saying to other deaf Southern Baptists that there are opportunities within our own (mission) agencies. It's saying that when God calls, there could be a place for you." He added: "Who better to minister to the deaf than the deaf themselves?"

Speidel writes for FMB.



**MAJOR STEP** — Yvette Aarons, the first deaf career missionary appointed by the Foreign Mission Board, makes a point with sign language. Aarons, 34, who was born in Jamaica and later moved to the United States, will work among some of the estimated 10,000 deaf people in Trinidad. She has been a mission volunteer there for the past three years. Aarons' Dec. 7 appointment is a "major, major step" for deaf Southern Baptists, said her friend Carter Bearden Jr., pastor of the deaf congregation at First Church of Richmond, Va. "Who better to minister to the deaf than the deaf themselves?" (BP photo by Sandy King)

### River Ministry grows

Andrea Ramage, 24, has signed on as assistant regional coordinator of the Mississippi River Ministry, a seven-state consortium of Baptist organizations working to evangelize and minister to mostly low-income residents along the lower Mississippi River region. Mississippi is one of the state conventions involved in the project, under the auspices of its Missions Extension and Associational Administration Department (formerly Cooperative Missions Department). Ramage, who holds a degree in secondary social studies education from the University of Kentucky, will serve the ministry for two years as a Home Mission Board US-2 missionary. Her responsibilities will include design of brochures and a newsletter, as well as speaking engagements, to spread the message of the Mississippi River Ministry to Southern Baptists in the central United States.

Ramage

### Alcohol lobbying intense

Proposals to include liquor taxes in the financing of a national health care program have apparently been killed, thanks to heavy pressure from the alcoholic beverage industry. **Booze News**, the newsletter of the Alcohol Policies Project at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, reports that Edgar Bronfman, chief of liquor giant Seagram Company, had dinner with President Bill Clinton just days before the President's Sept. 22 health care reform speech. In addition, Clinton was guest of honor a few days later at a Bronfman-sponsored fundraiser in New York City. Alcohol industry lobbying has also paid off on Capitol Hill, where Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine) and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Illinois) have announced their opposition to higher taxes on alcohol. Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kansas), however, has suggested that higher taxes on alcoholic beverages may have to be considered to cover the costs of the proposed health plan.

### Looking Back...

#### 10 years ago

Mississippi Baptist Foundation trustees celebrated the 40th anniversary of the foundation by announcing the ninth consecutive year of increases in both yield and earned income for foundation funds.

#### 20 years ago

The five members of Percy Simmons' family in Cliff Temple Church in Natchez accumulate a total of 34 years perfect attendance in Sunday School. The three children in the family lead their parents, with nine years perfect attendance each.

#### 50 years ago

Gulf Coast ministers begin a campaign to wipe out illegal gambling in their area by calling for a grand jury investigation of lax law enforcement that has allowed the proliferation of slot machines up and down the coast.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

## Words and more words

The changing attitude of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leaders apparently is geared to the swift increase in offerings. In the early days the CBF gave about 75% of all gifts to SBC causes. Now that has changed to 25% and Cecil Sherman, CBF Coordinator, has indicated it will drop even more.

At first the CBF funds were used as leverage to coerce the SBC into broadening the tent and include moderate participation. Most of the CBF leaders have insisted they are Southern Baptists and intend to remain in the Convention. Keith Parks, mission leader for CBF, was most adamant on this point.

We have sought to keep the SBC controversy out of Mississippi and at the same time promote the SBC mission program. The political stance of the SBC has not always been pleasing but hopefully one day the stance would be altered and the whole SBC family could be under the umbrella. Mississippi is a pace-setter in Cooperative Program giving and has enjoyed the mission support of all our churches.

During the last convention in Jackson a small group of CBF advocates met and were addressed by Harlan Spurgeon, a

former Foreign Mission Board administrator who now works with Keith Parks in the Fellowship. Spurgeon indicated the FMB has vast resources and even a 20% decline would not affect the FMB operations.

The FMB does have \$117 million in endowment and contingency funds, but this is not earmarked for daily operations. Usually there is an equal amount of funds allocated to various field projects but not yet spent and this cannot be used for daily operating funds. It is invested and draws interest until requested.

We welcome Harlan Spurgeon to Mississippi anytime, but I do wish he would leave such messages at home. Keith Parks said, "Amen," to Spurgeon's message but hastened to say, "I'm trying to reassure people that the missionaries are not going to be without a salary or be isolated on the mission field and not be able to get home."

The whole Baptist family is taking more irreversible actions that increase the concern for mid-stream Baptists. The SBC leadership will not back up, negotiate, nor enlarge the tent. The CBF will not go away, but will grow and continue to siphon churches and funds for its missionary

causes. This is estimated to be over \$10 million for the current year. The mid-stream Baptists will continue to be swayed back and forth by both groups but basically will support the Cooperative Program.

It will be easy for CBF leaders to misread several state conventions' actions made in November. It is not so much turning toward the CBF as it is a refusal to accept SBC-style political activity.

W.A. Criswell is a famous preacher and justly so. He is wrong, however, in declaring in a Tupelo conference last week that all the states are in the hands of the liberals... including Mississippi. Criswell, himself, was called a "liberal" by R.L. Hymer, independent pastor in California. Jerry Falwell is a liberal in the eyes of the followers of Frank Norris and John R. Rice. The Pharisees thought all groups were liberal except the Pharisees.

There are few liberals in the SBC and even fewer in Mississippi. We've had 15 years of this hardening of the attitudes and little has been settled. Still we hope, we pray, that the coming year will bring us reconciliation. Why continue to fight this war of words when so much is at stake?

## Lottie Moon Offering —

## Conduct missions without sacrifice?

By Harrell Cushing

In one sense, the history of missions is the history of sacrifice by missionaries.

The apostle Paul and his companions suffered often and sacrificed much to bring the message of salvation to the lost. Modern missions has seen sacrifice too.

The names of William Carey, David Livingston, Mary Slessor, Adoniram and Ann Judson, Luther Rice, Lottie Moon, and Bill Wallace speak volumes about the sacrifice required to tell the good news of God's redeeming grace.

All such sacrifice has its root in the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Are you willing to follow our Lord, Paul, and countless others by sacrificing in order to bring the message of salvation to lost people?

The world cannot be reached for Christ without sacrifice by Christians. Some sacrifice in order to go as missionaries. A few pray and give sacrificially to support them and their work. But many seem unwilling to pray or

give sacrificially to win our world to Jesus.

How do you measure the level of your giving for missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions? Would your gift be a tip, a token, respectable, or really sacrificial?

**CHANGE THE WORLD NOW!**  
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering  
Goal: \$85 million

During my student days at Southwestern Seminary, the Lottie Moon Offering was a story of sacrifice. One student gave her next semester tuition money for missions; a seminary wife placed her wedding ring in the offering to be sold and the proceeds given.

I most recently saw this level of sacrifice last July when about 40 foreign missionary families, attending their annual mission meeting in South Africa, pledged or gave from their meager support more than \$15,000 to the Lottie

Moon offering.

The 1992 Lottie Moon offering was nearly \$4,000,000 short of the goal. That fact and some decline in Cooperative Program giving have caused the Foreign Mission Board to require each mission to reduce operation budgets by 10% in 1994. This ought not be so! Let's change it by giving sacrificially this year.

There is no better way to support world missions than the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Cooperative Program. Every dollar given through the Lottie Moon offering is used on the mission field.

Are you willing to join hearts and hands with our missionaries in sacrificing for our Lord? Your sacrificial gift in 1993 for missions will send an urgently needed message of hope to your missionaries.

Cushing is director of the Stewardship Development and Cooperative Program Promotion Department of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"OUR PASTOR INTENDS TO PREACH 13 SERMONS ON HOSEA. WHAT ARE MY LEGAL RIGHTS?"



1994 Winter Bible Study  
(Formerly January Bible Study)  
**Hosea: God's Redeeming Love**

## THE FRAGMENTS

## Yet a little sleep

The revised version of some old poetry: "Early to bed, early to rise, makes one healthy, wealthy, and apt to get his own breakfast."

I am considered by my children to be an early riser. Supposedly this comes from my father and my grandfather. Both had the obnoxious saying, "Get up, get up, here it is Monday, tomorrow is Tuesday, next day Wednesday; half the week gone and nothing done."

Papa would get up at 4:30 and wait for the sunrise... the only thing was he wanted everyone to know he was up. If Ben Franklin had been truthful when he said, "The early morning has gold in its mouth," then we would all be millionaires.

My children say, "Why do you get up so early?" I really have no answer for that. I'm just afraid Papa will somehow materialize and catch me in bed. This is the real generation gap that will smite you. The children come in late, get

up late, and are eternally in need of sleep. That is not for me. I like to stay up late — 9:30 or 10 — and get up at a reasonable hour — 6 or 6:30.

Somewhere in all our New Year resolutions there should be this commanding theme: "Ah, sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care" as Shakespeare had Macbeth crying out in tragedy.

And a tired neighbor is credited with saying, "The only reason Rip Van Winkle slept 20 years was because his neighbors didn't have a power mower nor a chain saw."

Needless to say, my research covered the Scriptures on this: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep" (Prov. 20:13). Hear Jesus saying, "Sleep on now, and take your rest" (Mark 14:41). Somewhere in this delightful season I hope we all catch up with our sleep and are able to face a happy New Year. — GH

## The Baptist Record

VOLUME 117 (ISSN-0005-5778) NUMBER 45  
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$7.35 a year payable in advance. Second class postage paid at Jackson, Mississippi. The Baptist Record is a member of Southern Baptist Press Association.

Editor.....Guy Henderson  
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Baptist Record Advisory Committee: Deborah Brunt, Corinth; David Raddin, Yazoo City; Robert Self, Brookhaven; Charles Dunagin, Summit; Horace Kerr, Brandon; Grady Collins, Philadelphia; Teresa Dickens, secretary.  
Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Send news, communication, and address changes to The Editor, BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205 (601) 969-3800.



# New Mongolian law limits Christianity, favors Buddhism

By Erich Bridges

HONG KONG (BP) — A new law passed by the Mongolian Parliament could confine Christian activities inside churches, require churches to register with the government, and ban religious activities in state-owned buildings or schools.

The law reportedly takes effect Feb. 1 in the once-isolated Asian nation surrounded by Russia and China. It also will give the state final say over the location of churches and number of church workers and bar foreigners from engaging in religious activity.

The Mongolian people were the focus of 1993's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization in May. Many Southern Baptist churches participate in the annual prayer campaign.

The legislation acknowledges the right of Mongolians to believe in any religion they choose. But it recognizes Buddhism alone as essential to Mongolia's long history and heritage and decrees Buddhism "shall be given its rightful place."

Other religious activity judged to be against Mongolian "customs and tradition" can be forbidden.

Islam and Shamanism also receive special exemption from the restrictions.

"Apart from Buddhism, Islam, and Shamanism, it is forbidden to carry out any religious teaching ... or any other activity, anywhere other than in churches and monasteries," the law states.

The law has alarmed the fledgling Mongolian Christian community, now estimated at between 800 and 2,000 members, which

began barely three years ago with less than 10 known believers. But a Western Christian observer with high-level government contacts counseled against panic.

"It sounds a lot worse than what it may turn out to be," said the observer. "No one is panicking right now. It's very difficult to predict what could occur."

The observer, who requested anonymity, cited three possible factors behind the law:

1) All kinds of mission and para-church groups have inundated Mongolia — once the hardest of hard-line Soviet bloc states. That also has happened in other formerly communist countries opening up to democracy and the outside world. Some outside groups perform excellent public service. Others engage only in aggressive evangelism. Others promise the state such things as Western experts in various fields. Some deliver that; others deliver only untrained, incompetent workers.

"The people who make a lot of noise and create disturbances are going to have a difficult time" under the new law, the observer predicted. "The people who quietly go about their business are not going to be interfered with."

"Mom and Pop" mission agencies that don't screen their personnel, he added, have "raised the ire of some Mongolians. They're trying to police against some of these things."

2) Some Buddhists feel threatened because Christianity is growing and has attracted the interest of many young

Mongolians.

3) Spiritual forces are at work. "Mongolia was the last country in the world to have a (Christian) church," the observer reminded. "It's only been in the last two and a half years that a church has ever

been established. Satan does not give up his territory without a fight."

Southern Baptists provide medical aid, humanitarian assistance, and English teaching in Mongolia through the aid organi-

zation Cooperative Services International (CSI). CSI workers also are helping Mongolians develop a family practice medical program through the Advanced Training Institute.

Bridges writes for FMB.

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### Mississippians rally against lesbian camp in community

CHICAGO (BP) — Baptists in rural Overt are unhappy with media portrayals of them. Local and national newspapers, magazines, and even the "Oprah Winfrey" television program have described them as narrow-minded haters trying to drive two lesbians from their community. Overt Baptists are crying foul and are seeking to get their story heard.

The events that brought Overt national attention started in July 1993 when Brenda and Wanda Henson bought 120 acres in Overt and began clearing the land. Townspeople became alarmed when they saw the Oct. 11 issue of the Grapevine, the Henson's newsletter, in which the women announced plans for Camp Sister Spirit, which they described as "being created from Lesbian Vision."

"We're talking about a very rural, very church-and-family oriented type of community," says John S. Allen, pastor of First Church in nearby Richton and a leader of local opposition to the retreat. "We're talking about an activist group coming in here to change this community."

Brenda Henson has written that Sister Spirit is a charitable organization committed to addressing social issues, ranging from hunger to "homophobia, ableism, fat oppression," and class conflict.

Paul Walley, a member of Allen's church active in the opposition to Sister Spirit, says the women are misguided. "They claim they're going to feed the hungry and take care of homeless people. They're out at a very rural setting; there are no homeless (or) hungry people out there."

"And they say they want to help adult education," Walley continues. "Well, eight miles down the road, we have free adult literacy training, and we have more teachers volunteered than we have people signed up to take the course. They say they are offering these services, but they are certainly about as far removed from where these services are needed as you can get. Overt is a community of about 200 people. There is no

population base there."

Sister Spirit's founders claim they are being harassed because the town is intolerant of their homosexuality. Media interest in their case blossomed when a dead dog was found draped over their mailbox in early November, and the Hensons say they have received threatening phone calls.

When the producers of the "Oprah Winfrey" show heard about the controversy, they invited the Hensons and their critics to Chicago in mid-December to tape an episode of her program. The Hensons faced off with Allen, Walley, and another First Church member, James Hendry, who lives near Camp Sister Spirit.

The program, which aired in syndication Dec. 21, began with a description of the Hensons as two privacy-seeking lesbians persecuted by conservative Christians. Though the hour-long exchange became heated at times — including Wanda Henson's claim that a Christian "slavemaster" attitude oppresses lesbians — Allen feels his side was able to make its case.

"I felt like we were able to establish our positions and hold our ground," Allen says. "I felt like (Sister Spirit) exposed themselves as being actively involved in the implementation of the gay agenda."

Walley agrees. "I think the taping was excellent because the Hensons exposed or brought out their positions to a greater degree than has ever been done."

Allen explained to host Oprah Winfrey that he opposes the women's activities because homosexuality is condemned by the Bible, and he therefore fears for the souls of vulnerable Overt residents and of the lesbians in the camp.

The Bible-based argument was met with skepticism from the studio audience, which included gay and lesbian activists as well as a busload of Overt residents. Allen feels the audience was stacked against him, with critics of Sister Spirit shunned by Winfrey. "We had Chicago-area Christians and pastors there who constantly

sought an opportunity to speak. They were seated... outside of the span of the camera, and they were never recognized. They were absolutely shut out of the debate."

Walley takes in stride the many anti-Christian comments made on the show. "If I am characterized by the fact that my opposition to them stems from my biblical morality, then I'm thrilled. I'm the fourth generation of my family to reside here. This camp is about eight or ten miles north of us. There is a biblical moral standard in our community. We don't all reach it, but these people — the whole focus of their organization is opposed to that."

"The fact is," says Allen, "they are trying to change our community. Their plans for our community are radical." He notes that one of the Hensons told Oprah Winfrey that her homosexuality was the central part of her life. "We don't want educators — heterosexual or homosexual — for whom the focus of their lives is their sexual activity. Regardless of your orientation, that is a life with a perverted focus and not a healthy one for the people you will be working with."

"We intend to keep using the opportunities that are presented to us to try to give our perception of what's going on," Allen says. "And if there are avenues of legal redress, we are going to investigate, but we don't know what can be done."

For now, things remain uneasy in Overt. Sister Spirit has asked U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate harassment of the camp's owners. Allen says anonymous threatening phone calls have been received by anti-camp activists, too, and he says he would welcome an investigation.

The harassment claims "distract from the real issue, and the real issue is them coming into this community," he says. "Their plans for this community are clearly revealed on ('Oprah') to be very activist: to impact this community in a way that is diametrically opposed to what this community has always been."

### SEBTS' accreditation reaffirmed by SACS

WAKE FOREST, NC (BP) — Southeastern Seminary has been removed from probation, reaffirmed in its accreditation, and reestablished as a member in good standing with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

SACS placed the seminary on probation in December 1991, principally citing trustee involvement in administrative practices and lack of long-range planning as the major reasons for the action.

Despite accreditation difficulties, Southeastern has seen an

increase in enrollment since June 1992 when Patterson arrived on campus.

Currently, there are 688 students enrolled at Southeastern.

Although SACS has removed Southeastern from probation, the seminary is still on probation with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the U.S. and Canada.

"ATS, of course, is the next item on the agenda," said Patterson. "We hope to have our probation with them resolved within the next six months."

### Volunteer builders needed for 1994 Japanese project

Volunteers are needed for two six-week construction projects in Japan during 1994. The twelve-member teams, which will build a church in Hiroshima, will serve Feb. 16 through April 1 and April 6 through May 20.

Each team will include 10 men and two women. Men will work at the construction site, while the women prepare meals and do laundry. Men on the first team will be framing, roofing, and finishing the

exterior while the second team will do dry wall and finish work.

All costs for travel, food, and lodging will be covered except for insurance, orientation, and en route lodging. An overnight stay in Tokyo with sightseeing will cost \$300.

Interested individuals should contact the Brotherhood Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205; phone (601) 968-3800.





## Delta State sounds trumpet

TRUMPET SOUND members of the BSU, Delta State University, for 1993-94 are (front row, from left): Toni Campbell, Gracie Caballero, Sarah Rives, Melanie Thorton, and Stacey Borger; back row, Gregg Hood, Ron Hart, Walter Tuner, Chad Sipes, Joey Lott, and Mark Davis. TRUMPET SOUND is available for ministry opportunities. Call 843-2507 or write the Baptist Student Union, P.O. Box 3292, Cleveland, MS 38733 for more information.

## East Africa missionaries give \$100,000 to missions

By Craig Bird

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — Southern Baptist missionaries don't just receive from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. They give, too.

Mission offerings given at nine 1993 annual meetings of missionaries in eastern and southern Africa added up to \$100,464 — and \$62,264 of that was designated for Lottie Moon.

"These are totally free-will offerings," said John Faulkner, Foreign Mission Board area director for mission work in the region. "The missionaries don't ask if they should take up an offering or how they should spend it — and FMB administrators don't make suggestions."

Earlier reports from Kenya about missionary giving to Lottie Moon moved FMB trustees to respond to a challenge to increase their Lottie Moon gifts. Fifty-seven of 89 trustees reporting as of Dec. 15 have pledged to contribute \$90,000 through their churches to the Lottie Moon offering.

Missionaries in some countries give their entire offering to Lottie Moon. Some split it between Lottie Moon and the Annie Arm-

strong Easter Offering for home missions. Others set aside part for the mission work of Baptist conventions in their countries or other special projects.

The numbers change often, but approximately 620 Foreign Mission Board missionaries are under appointment in the 26 countries of eastern and southern Africa. Roughly one-fourth are absent from the field at any one time for furlough, medical leave, or other reasons.

Assuming that about 465 missionaries were on the field to give to the 1993 mission offerings, their per capita gifts totaled \$134 to Lottie Moon and \$216 to the total offerings.

"Imagine if Southern Baptists in the pew gave at that level," Faulkner said. "If even half of the 15 million members of Southern Baptist churches gave \$134 each to Lottie Moon, the Foreign Mission Board would have over \$1 billion to fund people and projects and programs to tell people about Jesus Christ!"

The goal for the 1993 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions is \$85 million.

Bird writes for FMB.

## Israel grants Arab Baptist pastor temporary visa home

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Arab Baptist pastor Alex Awad received a long-awaited Christmas gift — one that took more than four years to secure.

Awad, an ordained Southern Baptist minister, has been working to obtain a visa so he can return to his homeland of Israel and serve as pastor of East Jerusalem Baptist Church.

The Israeli government reportedly has refused to grant him a work visa or even a temporary tourist visa — until recently.

He has been granted a tourist visa to return home for the Christmas season, and Awad hopes it will lead to a permanent visa.

Awad said he believes the recent action represents a change in policy and attitude that will allow him to return to the West Bank with his family, perhaps this summer.

If the permanent visa is secured, Awad would serve as a New Testament professor at Bethlehem Bible College, and a minister among Palestinian Christians.

Awad, 47, was born in Jerusalem and spent more than 10 years in the United States, becoming an American citizen. He was ordained to the gospel ministry by First Church, Ellijay, Ga., and became pastor of Clayton Church, Canton, Ga., in 1977.

# America needs churches to combat violence, says Clinton

WASHINGTON (ABP) — The nation's streets, schools, and homes will be safer when its churches and synagogues become more active in the fight against violence, according to President Clinton.

Clinton emphasized the religious community's involvement with the crime issue during a Dec. 17 media round table with nine religion reporters in the Cabinet Room of the White House.

The church is perhaps the only institution that can hold life together as economic and family structures continue to crumble, the president said.

"And it seems to me that to turn it around is going to require a massive, highly concentrated effort by all Americans, starting with the president but going down to every community... but also really it requires almost a spiritual change."

Clinton met with representatives from Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant news media, including Religious News Service, Associated Baptist Press, Catholic News Service, Christian Century, and

Christianity Today.

Government policies alone will not curb violence, he said. Some churches are doing more than others on this issue, he added.

"I think that they (churches) can weigh in heavily on behalf of all the efforts that are being made to make the streets and schools more secure — putting more police officers on the street and having alternative punishments for young people that have a higher probability of working, the drug courts, boot camps, and things like that."

Many churches could reach out more to troubled children and get them involved in their programs and worship services, he said. Some churches could be more involved in neighborhood activities designed to help citizens take back their streets, he said.

"I'm convinced that first we have to reimpose security, but then we have to try to rebuild the lives of these young people," he added.

In part, schools need to instill basic civic values that teach respect for democracy, honesty,

self, others, and the environment, he said. The schools can help carry the load, he said, but not without a strategy that includes the family and churches.

Because society is organized around family and work, the president said, the Clinton administration tries to consider the impact of its policies on both.

"We ought to do everything we can to make sure that people can have a successful family life and a successful work life and that our policy ought to be that in America people should be able to succeed as parents and as workers. If they only succeed at one, whichever one it is, we are impoverished by that."

The average American worker could benefit from policies that favor work over welfare and make it possible for people to do right by their children, he said. They also need a revamped unemployment system.

"Those are three things that I think we owe people in this world.... And I think the business community should take the lead in providing those things," he said.

## Saving marriages is fervent mission of "Ethics and Religion" columnist

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE (BP) — Saving marriages is not Mike McManus' only passion, but it certainly is one of his most fervent. The journalist/marriage-for-life protagonist is taking on the religious establishment and charging it with neglect.

Saving marriages "is not the job of the government; it is not the job of the school; it's the job of the church," McManus told a group of Southern Baptist Convention leaders in Nashville recently for annual meetings. McManus is writer of the nationally syndicated column, "Ethics and Religion."

"Certainly the church is helping fight the epidemic (of divorce), but not as effectively as it could," McManus wrote in a special supplement to the National & International Religion Report.

"Many pastors sidestep tough topics like chastity, cohabitation, and divorce, even though secular evidence supports a biblical position on these issues."

"We have a strange paradox in the United States," he told state discipleship and family ministry directors at the Baptist Sunday School Board. "We have more people in church than any other modern nation. Gallup says two-thirds of our people are members of a church."

"And 42% are in church on Sunday, yet we have the highest divorce rates, the highest teen pregnancy rates, and the highest crime rates. We seem to have all this religiosity and no demonstra-

tion of that religion."

McManus said Tennessee, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Nevada, Wyoming, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas have some of the highest divorce rates in the country.

"The states with the highest divorce rates are in the South," said McManus, who can spew off indicting statistics about divorce that he hopes will motivate churches to take action.

"Sixty percent of American children born today will see their parents divorced by the time they are 18. Of those children who have suffered this pain of divorce, half of them will see a second divorce before they are 18," McManus said.

Other statistics McManus routinely quotes are:

— Six out of 10 new marriages will end in divorce or separation.

— One million children will see their parents divorce this year.

— One-half of new marriages annually are remarriages.

— Seventy-five percent of remarriages fail.

McManus is not boldly spouting stats with no solution. He has a battle plan for what he calls his "War on Divorce."

"America's pastors, priests, and rabbis have access to U.S. marriages, but less than 20% of all American couples have had any premarital counseling," he said.

A member of Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Md., McManus has traveled to at least 25 cities from Fairbanks, Alaska,

and Modesto, Calif., to Nashville and Atlanta touting his "Community Marriage Policy."

Essentially, the policy is an effort to join the forces of area clergy from several denominations in signing a community contract that would radically reduce the divorce rate, he said. He believes the answer lies in ecumenical cooperation.

The rules of the community marriage contract include several actions.

— Require engaged couples to undergo a minimum of four months of marriage preparation, completing a premarital inventory that identifies areas of conflict in the relationship.

— Enlist mentor couples in the congregation to work with engaged and newlywed couples.

— Encourage engaged and married couples to attend weekend encounters.

— Appoint a committee of attorneys to draft possible changes in marriage and divorce laws.

"Sixty percent of all couples married today live together first. Of those people who cohabit, 40% don't marry," he cited. "Of those who marry, 45% will divorce before year 10."

McManus believes cohabitation is the reason the number of never-married adults has doubled from 21 million in 1970 to 42 million today.

"Some people live with partner A, B, and C, then wind up not married at 37, and they wonder why," McManus said.

Lackey writes for BSSB.



# Missionaries suggest ways to offer beggars real help

By Sarah Zimmerman

ATLANTA (BP) — Ignoring them lacks compassion. Giving them cash seems unwise. Getting more involved demands time and effort.

People begging for money present a dilemma to Christians who want to help the needy but also want to be good stewards of their resources.

In New York City, home missionary Taylor Field said he can easily encounter 40 people asking for money by walking just 12 blocks. His stance is to never give cash.

"When you give money, too often you participate in the person's problem," said Field, pastor of Graffiti Baptist Center. Rather than buying food or clothes, people often use the money for drugs or alcohol, he explained.

Toby Pitman, home missionary in New Orleans, agreed. One couple with an infant stayed at New Orleans' Brantley

Center at night. During the day, they went to a corner a few blocks away and put the baby on a blanket. The couple received about \$100 a day from people passing by, Pitman said.

Donors probably assumed their gifts would be used to take care of the baby, but the baby's physical needs were met through the Brantley Center, Pitman said.

For some people, asking for assistance is a well-planned business scheme, said Harold Hime, associate director of the Home

Mission Board's Church and Community Ministries Department.

Hime was a pastor in Alaska for eight years. When people came to the church asking for money, the church staff asked why they needed money. If they said they

and give them \$5, how much good is that?" Pitman asked.

People often give money to beggars out of guilt, Hime noted. "Knowing you might have been manipulated feels better than feeling guilty. It feels better than worrying about it."

Yet "more people are abused by over-indulgence than neglect," Hime said. "You really help somebody when you help them help themselves."

Many communities have a clearinghouse that screens people seeking help to prevent churches and other service organizations from being manipulated, Hime said. If a community does not have a clearinghouse, he suggested starting one.

Before referring someone to a service organization, Pitman suggested studying the agencies' financial accountability, services it provides, and whether the gospel is presented.

"Identify the one you like the best and support it financially," Pitman said. "Become personally acquainted with the leaders and become involved in lives of individuals."

Investing in people is risky and time-consuming, Field noted. Some are grateful; others are not. It can be dangerous and it is often overwhelming. Field's advice is "be wise as serpents and gentle as doves."

Zimmerman writes for Home Mission Board.

were hungry, Hime offered to take them to a grocery store to buy food. If they were unemployed, Hime volunteered to take them on a job interview. No one ever accepted his offers.

People asking for money have legitimate needs or they would not subject themselves to the humiliation of begging, Pitman said. They may need to recover from an addiction or learn money management, but those needs cannot be met with a dollar bill.

"Even if you're very generous

## Use caution in contributing

ATLANTA (BP) — In the restaurant, Tal Davis overheard a man raising funds for missions for his church. When people reached for their wallets, Davis asked how long the solicitor had been a follower of the Rev. Moon.

As interim director of the Home Mission Board's Interfaith Witnessing Department, Davis recognized the signs of cult members seeking donations. Since most Southern Baptists may not be in tune with their tactics, Davis warns that all seemingly worthwhile causes may not be as they appear.

The Unification Church, the Children of God or Family of Love, and Hare Krishnas are among groups which raise money with public solicitations, Davis said. Members of the Nation of Islam raise money by selling papers to the public.

Cult members may wear a badge or have a statement on their collection plate that looks official, Davis said, but they rarely say who they represent.

While groups such as the Salvation Army have legitimate public fund-raising efforts, Davis suggests using caution when approached for money.

It's a stewardship issue as well as an interfaith concern, Davis said. "God holds us accountable not just for giving but for making sure the purpose is good and that it will be used as stated."

Davis suggested getting more information before supporting people asking for donations. If they have a brochure about their cause, write for information about the group's purpose and financial accountability.

The best way to channel money for mission efforts, Davis said, is through local churches where the use of money is publicly disclosed and members have a voice in how money is spent.

## SBC agency leaders meet for prayer

RICHMOND, VA (BP) — Eight Southern Baptist Convention officials of missions-oriented agencies met Dec. 13 in a prayer retreat with an emphasis on "hopes, dreams, and visions for world missions."

The informal retreat at the Foreign Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center in nearby Rockville, Va., was primarily for prayer, participants told Baptist Press.

"Our purpose was to pray and seek God's face for renewal and spiritual awakening in light of enormous changes in the world, the nation, and the convention," Avery Willis, FMB senior vice president for overseas operations, said. Willis, chairman of the SBC Bold Mission Prayer Thrust Team,

initiated and convened the meeting.

Also attending were Jerry Rankin, FMB president; Larry L. Lewis, Home Mission Board president; James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president; Delanna W. O'Brien, Woman's Missionary Union executive director; Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president; James T. Draper Jr., Baptist Sunday School Board president; and Henry T. Blackaby, consultant in prayer and spiritual awakening in a joint project for the HMB, FMB, and BSSB.

"We are very much aware of the high priority of prayer in staying on track as Southern Baptists with the work of God and his mission in the world," Rankin said.

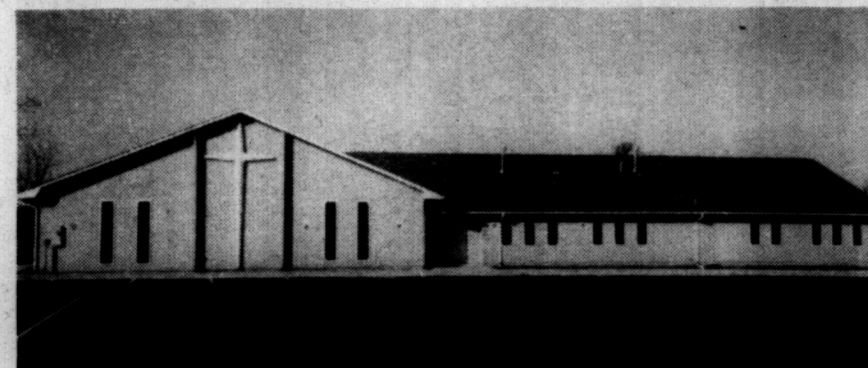
"We feel that we, as agency heads, must take seriously our leadership role in spiritual renewal and awakening. Our time together in a day of prayer was a significant opportunity for sharing, encouragement, and bonding together."

Several told Baptist Press the prayers were for the nation, Southern Baptist churches, and each other.

"We talked about our hopes, dreams, and visions for world missions," Chapman said. "I was struck, particularly, by two common threads... a burden to see God move among Southern Baptists in a mighty and fresh way, and the desire of each person there to rely wholly on the Lord in fulfilling our leadership responsibilities."

Thursday, December 30, 1993

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5



The Builders For Christ Mission Team of Mississippi recently assisted in the construction of facilities for the Vietnamese Baptist Church (above) in Tulsa, Okla. The building was dedicated Dec. 4. The Builders For Christ are led by Terry Cross of State Boulevard Church, Meridian, and T.S. Pigford of Collinsville. Most of those who helped the Oklahoma church were from Lauderdale Association.

## VISN/ACTS cable channel to undergo name change, become "Faith & Values"

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — The cable channel ACTS shares with VISN will be renamed "Faith & Values Channel" effective Jan. 2, 1994.

ACTS (American Christian Television System) is a faith and family cable television service of the Radio and Television Commission that reaches into more than 20 million homes. Since 1992, when ACTS began sharing the cable channel with VISN (Vision Interfaith Satellite Network), it has been called the "VISN/ACTS Channel."

"This doesn't represent a change in direction," said Jack Johnson, president of the RTVC. "We'll continue to use the acronym ACTS. And we'll continue to provide Christian family values programming. The name change simply enables the cable operator to better advertise and promote programming with local media. It is expected that many

cable companies will use the initials F&V to identify the channel. It was also very important to position the channel for the new 500-cable-channel marketplace that is on the horizon."

Johnson said the "Faith and Values Channel" would continue the practice of no on-air fund-raising. The RTVC receives approximately 55% of its current annual \$8.7 million budget from Cooperative Program receipts. The agency must raise the remainder through advertising and solicitation of individuals. Churches are not solicited.

When ACTS and VISN entered the channel-sharing agreement with cable giant TCI in 1992, ACTS was available in approximately 8 million cable homes and was having difficulty expanding beyond the southern half of the United States. The agreement put ACTS in 11 more states and more than doubled its outreach.

## Christian leaders cite new AIDS cases in action plea

FOREST, Va. — Christian Action Network President Martin Mawyer called for a "brand new debate" on homosexual rights issues in light of the latest evidence revealing AIDS can be contracted through casual contact.

"These two cases involving children only confirm what many of us feared when

what, until now, have been considered the conventional methods: sexual intercourse and intravenous drug use.

"AIDS activists have been allowed to mislead the American people by making AIDS a civil rights banner under which to rally the homosexual rights community."

**"AIDS activists have been allowed to mislead the American people by making AIDS a civil rights banner...."**

**— Martin Mawyer**

the truth to the American people and these latest cases mandate a brand new debate on homosexual rights issues. We're dealing with very serious consequences here," Mawyer said.

Mawyer referred to news just released regarding two independent cases involving children who contracted AIDS from other children by different means than

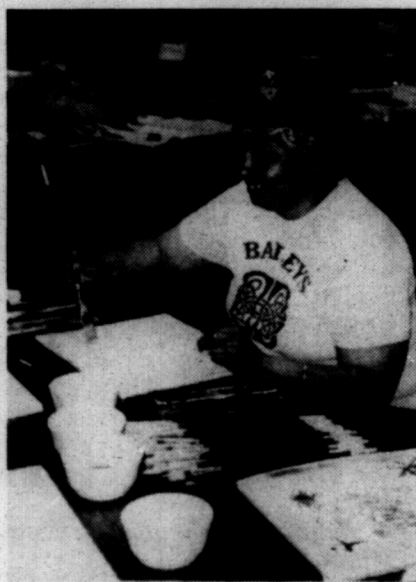
ty. They've maligned the truth for their own selfish goals: to increase taxpayers' support for the homosexual community, to garner media sympathy, to press for specific 'civil rights' legislation, and to mandate homosexual sex-education in all of the nation's schools. These two latest cases compel all of us to completely re-examine homosexual rights issues because AIDS is a public health problem that now threatens the well-being of all Americans," Mawyer said.





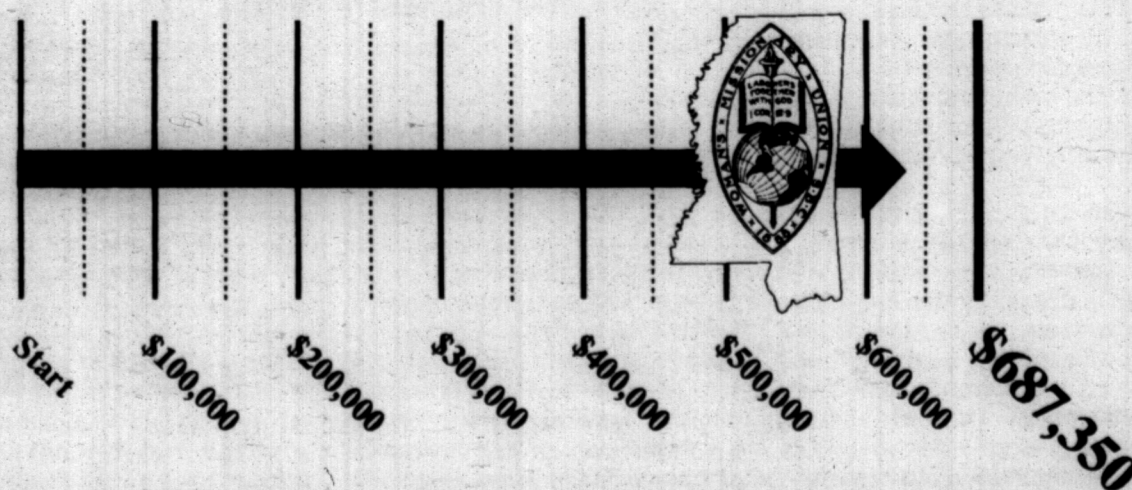
## Mississippian heads Uptown

Sam Gore, professor and former head of MC's Art Department (left), spent a week last July at Uptown Baptist Church in inner-city Chicago. There, he taught painting and hand-built ceramics in a workshop for the homeless, elderly, and otherwise outcast who comprise Uptown's target ministry. Gore also delivered a sermon wrapped around the on-the-spot creation of a head of Christ in clay, and obtained for the church a Mississippi-donated kiln in which to fire ceramics. Uptown's activities minister, Brian Bakke (below left), in turn came to MC this fall for a week-long crash course on the potter's wheel. Bakke, an artist and athlete, has chosen with the help of the Home Mission Board to maintain a ministry to street people through the arts and crafts workshops, "treating these people like they're worth something," says Gore. Bakke also has organized the Miracle League, which reaches out to gang-vulnerable kids, crosses gang lines, and delivers the gospel via basketball. Gore says in any game there will be fights and professions of faith in equal numbers. In addition to the summer workshop's painting and ceramics, participants sewed tote bags, made hand mirrors (above left), and created a mosaic mural from scrap materials depicting Abraham and Sarah. Martha Emmert (above), retired Northern Baptist missionary, was the expert at using available materials to create art works. When she arrived on the field in Congo (now Zaire), she was told she would teach art, but had no materials. She had to teach villagers to use plants, broken bottles, and tin cans to make craft items to God's glory. Gore says Bakke understands and utilizes the fact that "art is a service, not... to be held up for its own glorification."



## Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions

Goal : \$687,350  
Current : \$636,559



# Land lists key issues facing America in '94

NASHVILLE (BP) — The primary social issue facing Americans next year is health-care reform and how the various proposals for reform impact "sanctity of life issues," according to Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission.

Land identified four key issues facing Americans in 1994 during a recent interview in Nashville. The other issues Land mentioned were race relations, violence and sexuality in the media, and religious liberty.

Regarding health-care reform, Land said his personal belief is that "our medical delivery system is in significant need of reform." The difficulty is in identifying the most practical, legitimate approach to reform.

Reform is needed, Land said, because, first, "significant numbers of people" are not now covered by medical insurance and, second, "some form of catastrophic provision" is needed to keep long-term treatment from bankrupting people.

Most Americans would say they want the system to "assure some minimal package of health care for everyone," Land stated. The question is, "What is the best way to achieve that?"

Land said the Christian Life Commission concentrates on three factors in analyzing various health-reform proposals: how the proposals treat 1) abortion, 2) choice of doctors, and 3) living wills and rationing of health care.

The Clinton administration's proposal would provide coverage for abortions. Land said he is opposed to that proposal as long as it includes abortion. If that obstacle were removed, he said he would consider other issues in the plan.

Regarding choice of doctors, Land is concerned that Americans have real choices, with a specific question involving mental health care. For instance, will a person who needs psychiatric treatment have the freedom to see a "Christian psychiatrist"?

"There is no way you can have a value-neutral" health-care system if there is "one comprehensive standard" for providing that care, Land said. The system will either have a "sanctity of life ethic or a quality of life ethic."

A sanctity of life ethic would stress the importance of all human life, no matter the quality. In other words, it sees people with impaired capabilities as of equal value to those with normal capabilities.

A quality of life ethic assigns less value to lives that are not normally healthy or productive. This ethic might limit health care for the elderly, those with declining health, the mentally retarded, and the permanently handicapped.

The Christian Life Commission supports a sanctity of life ethic, both in federal health-care policy and in the nation's general approach to medical care, Land said.

The Clinton proposal also

would "eliminate private practice" of medicine as Americans have known it, because doctors would have to meet government guidelines in order to qualify for federal funding, Land noted.

The Clinton plan has received the most attention, but there are other plans being proposed, to be examined in a CLC-sponsored health-care consultation in January. Afterward, the CLC will communicate its findings to Southern Baptists and suggest questions Baptists need to ask in "formulating their own position," Land said.

Another "critical" issue in 1994 will be race relations, Land said.

"We are seeing literally a worldwide assault on the human race based on old ethnic hatred and racial prejudice," he stated. "We are in very grave danger of the virtual tribalization of the globe."

In this country, "we have to come to a point where we cherish our diversity and at the same time value those things we share in common as Americans," Land said.

Bringing together people from varied cultures is difficult, but Land believes "those who have been the oppressors, ... the perpetrators of prejudice, have the majority of the responsibility for reconciliation."

White Americans need to communicate a "desire for a fundamental change in the relationship," he said. Anglos "need to take the first, second, and third steps."

The CLC is producing a new video on race relations, to be ready for Southern Baptists' Race Relations Sunday, Feb. 13.

Concerning violence and sexuality in the media, Land said, "The public is fed up. Television and media violence is a direct contributing cause" to violence in America.

Land described pornography as "sexual violence, nothing more, nothing less." And he cited links between pornography and "anti-social behavior." The CLC has produced a new video on pornography, and is "... doing everything we can to mobilize Southern Baptists" regarding "abuse of the public airwaves."

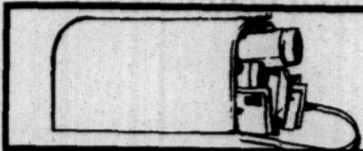
On religious liberty, Land stated government has increasingly intruded on the free exercise of religion.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, recently enacted into law, "does not get us out of the woods," he said. "RFRA will be challenged in court," and the Supreme Court can overturn it.

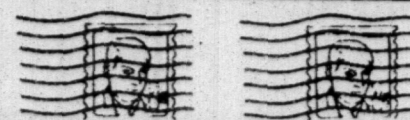
Dangers to religious liberty include restrictions regarding practice of religion in public places and zoning restrictions that ban Bible studies in homes or keep church buildings out of an area, Land said.

There is an increasing assumption by government "that it has the right to restrict the rights of its citizens to expression of their religious convictions and beliefs," he stated.





# Letters to the editor



## Pain of divorce

Editor:

Regarding the subject of divorce among ministers, I would like to share what happened to me as a former wife of a Southern Baptist minister.

I've experienced the joys and pains of serving faithfully in the ministry for 20 years and being rejected. The last few years of my marriage were spent in fear, living with an abusive partner. I've suffered through mental cruelty and harassment.

I've seen my family torn apart by divorce. The wounds of adult children of divorce take a long time to heal. The holidays are especially hard for victims of divorce. Daily I'm faced with the embarrassment and humiliation of the past and dealing with the fear of the future without a job, health insurance, or means to support myself.

Constantly, I'm reminded of my losses because I'm now living with family who are kind and caring and took me in.

I know the agony of going to court again and again to fight for what is rightfully mine and losing.

If you choose to print this,

please do not use my name, as it would cause another lawsuit.  
Name withheld

## Proud of students

Editor:

I am so proud of the youths in our state capital standing up for prayer in our schools. I also applaud Bishop Knox, the principal who allowed this to happen in your Wingfield High School.

A prayer of mine concerns the moral decay of our country (especially since Clinton was elected president). Seems as if the Christian morals and values that our nation was founded upon no longer exist because the Christian's freedom of speech and religion no longer exists.

It is great to see our Christian youths have the strength and knowledge to once again stand up for those rights (something that all adult Christians should do).

So, thank you, Mr. Knox, and Wingfield High, for bringing this issue to the attention of our nation, especially at the most sacred time of the year, Christmas, Christ's birthday.

Betty Pickens Brown  
Thaxton

## Why print needlings?

Editor:

Why? I cannot understand why you published a letter from a Mormon person. Do we need needling from a person in a group completely opposite from our faith? Jesus is Savior and Lord of our lives, and no need for any other. In fact, there can be no other. This, according to the Bible that we believe or there is nothing for us to look to.

There are conservative/fundamentalists, and liberal/moderates, in our convention, but surely we all believe 2 Timothy 3:16 and 4:1-4.

Everyone has a right to their own beliefs, but seems to me because of your reluctance to believe fundamental ideas, this person got a chance to take a slap at fundamentalist beliefs.

Many other articles on Mormonism in Utah of how Baptists are treated, make [Mark] Wingfield sound kind.

Do have a lovely Christ-filled Christmas.

Katherine Bartran  
Tylertown

## Stands with students

Editor:

In the Dec. 9, 1993 issue, "Editor's Notebook," there is some admiration for the students, with much towards trying to focus our attention on other matters of valuable importance, as if what they were standing for was not important.

I am reminded of Ezekiel 22:30: "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none."

## Mississippian tells of efforts in Portugal

By Donald Ray McCain

On Jan. 1, 1993, the Baptist Church in Amadora, Portugal, began to pray and work for great results in this city.

During Easter, church members gave out in two days 5,000 tracts and invitations to church. They also gave their testimonies regarding what the Lord is doing in their lives. After a training program and seminar on personal witnessing, they continued the work.

In November, Bobby C. Perry, director of missions for Mississippi Gulf Coast Association, preached a revival campaign. One young man walked the aisle, but many decisions were made for Christ.

The first night's attendance was about 45 to 50. Over 130 people were present in the final service. Ten young African men sang in their native tongue. Many of the 22 young people did mission work on the beach here during the summer. One young man served in Morocco with Muslim people.

Thanks to Bobby C. Perry and Southern Baptists, we are happy in our work here in Portugal. All the

In a time that I personally believe God is trying America to see who will stand for Jesus, I am proud and thankful for our youths. If the laws of the land stand against God, then there must be a change. God himself demands his laws come first. These kids have been punished by suspensions and now talked down by the media telling half-truths and one-sided stories. Some have been let down by their pastors and parents. Yes, there are pros and cons about prayer spoken by some (by the way, the kids are being told when they can pray) but the evidence speaks for itself. What came into schools when God was told to leave?

It is not only prayer in schools these kids are standing for, but what is being taught them in our churches all across this land and that is to stand for what is right and moral, speaking in and for the name of Jesus. Sir, it is past time

we Christians practice what we preach. I stand with these youths who stood for the right reason, proudly and without shame, making up the hedge and standing in the gap.

Larry Pitts  
Waynesboro

## Supports editor

Editor:

We applaud your point of view and your thoughtful exegesis regarding school prayer in the editorial, "Excited over the wrong thing" (Baptist Record, Dec. 9, 1993). The happy serendipity of its appearing concomitantly with a scathing letter to the editor ("Clinton exhorted?," by Jimmie Douglas of Brandon) is fortunate, carrying as it does the appropriate response to such criticism.

Glen and Thelma Pearson  
Hattiesburg

## Jan. 23 set to be focus day for Baptist Men

Baptist Men by nature are action-oriented. There is a tendency for some Baptist Men's units to focus on activities to the exclusion of ongoing missions education. To effectively involve men in missions we must maintain a balance between activities and education.

Baptist Men's Day is scheduled for Jan. 23, 1994, to provide all churches the opportunity to focus on both missions education and missions activities.

In the Baptist Men's Planbook (1993-94), suggestions are made to help Baptist Men make Jan. 23 a significant day of missions awareness.

Every church deserves a focus on its Baptist Men. For more information or assistance, call the Brotherhood Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, (601) 968-3800.



## LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ed.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson

I feel so guilty. My 87-year-old mother is unable to care for herself. She is very demanding and her Alzheimer's is getting worse. She refuses to be placed in a nursing home, so she is living with our family. My wife is ready to leave. Help!

As our parents get older, we as children take on the role of caretaker and have to make hard decisions. Some preliminary steps are needed.

—Strengthen your relationship with the Lord. You need extra wisdom and insight that you cannot provide on your own.

—Love yourself. Take time to exercise and relax as a family and as a couple. Your mother may not understand, but you must keep in balance.

—Love your mother by finding out what to do in situations like this. Find a support group. Talk to friends in similar situations. Talk to her physician. Contact the Council on Aging for helpful materials.

You may not be able to make your mother completely happy, but remember "balance." You probably will not have equal parts for all your obligations, but take time for areas of physical, spiritual, and emotional strength.

This will fight the guilt and allow you to endure the pain.

Our four-year-old son is still getting up at night and crawling into our bed. We usually don't notice him until morning. Is this wrong?

Most children grow out of this as they get older. Nightmares, colds, or noises may wake your son, and he comes to your bed for security. I would not make a big issue out of this at his age. If you wake up, simply put him back in his bed. If he is still restless, stay with him until he goes back to sleep. Separation anxiety is scary to a young child. The more security, warmth, availability, and strength that we provide as parents, the more confident our children become.

Allowing children to always sleep with parents is not good because they begin to think the world revolves around them. This creates selfishness and does not teach the need for boundaries, privacy, and the importance of the word "no." Children brought up where they determine the schedules of everyone in a household are usually not confident and are insecure.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name and address not required. Remember: In time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



Students and teachers at Portugal Baptist Seminary are joined by Rose McCain, missionary, and Bobby C. Perry, director of missions for Gulf Coast Association, guest speaker.



## Just for the Record



Members of Providence Church, Hattiesburg, who have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries are now known as the Four "G's" — an acronym coined for God's Golden Guys and Gals. They are, standing from left, Frank and Ray Dell Perry, Clyde and Dorothy Richardson, Johnnie and Lina Humphries, Zelma and Berniece Smith, R.F. and Frances McKenzie, Edith and J.B. Kelly, and Edith and Mickey Gilpin. Not present are Victorine and J.C. Williams, Sing and Myrtle Fan-



Fredonia Church, Union County, recently held a recognition service. Alicia Eaker, Holly Weeden, and Dana Hall, pictured, received their Citation Certificate. The citation level is the highest level in the Studiact Program. H. Gregg Thomas is pastor.

Registration at Mississippi College for the 1994 spring semester will take place on Jan. 10, 7 p.m., and all day Jan. 11. Monday night registration is for graduates and undergraduates. Call the registrar's office, 925-3219, for more information.

A one-day Sunday School and Church Growth Seminar will be conducted at Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, on Jan. 15. Elmer Towns will be the leader of the seminar designed to inform and motivate pastors and workers in Sunday School. Call 1-800-553-4769 or 956-5000 for more information.

Issues of the Heart, a new division of Rapha Ministries especially for women, will hold a seminar on Feb. 12 at the University of Mobile. Call (303) 271-9255 for more information.

The Jackson County Life League (Pascagoula) will present a pro-life program, Jan. 20, 7 p.m., in

nin, and Woodruff and Jimmie Humphries.

Spouses (married 50 or more years before death of mates) seated from left, are Cora (Mrs. W.H.) Keen, Evie (Mrs. J.H.) Campbell, Mary Ruth (Mrs. A.J.) Herrin, Ruby (Mrs. John) Mixon, Gladys (Mrs. Nubb) Rainey, Janie (Mrs. William) McMahan, and J.A. Stevenson (Ora Mae). Not pictured are Willie Blanche (Mrs. Jesse) Delk, Cora (Mrs. L.V.) Clinton, and Sybil (Mrs. Walter) Lee.



New Hope Church, Foxworth, recently awarded perfect attendance pins to some of its members. They are, left to right: first row, Mitch Ratliff (three years); second row, Karla Ratliff (two years), Amy Lowery (seven years), Dustin Stringer (11 years), Tiffany Kroner (five years); third row, Donna Ratliff (15 years), Patsy Lowery (four years), Peggy Stringer (six years), B.B. Stringer (38 years); fourth row, Nancy Thomas (12 years), Bonnie Pittman (four years), and Donald Lowery (six years). Those not pictured are Virgie Lee Pounds (two years), Sherrell Magee (12 years), Brandie Magee (13 years), and Jimmy Thomas (24 years). Kent Campbell is pastor.

Ocean Springs Civic Center. Gianna Jessen, who was aborted and survived, will be the guest speaker. Call 769-0654 for more information.

## Ruth Womack dies Dec. 13

McMINNVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Ruth Womack, a retired Southern Baptist missionary nurse known for her battle against infant malnutrition in Nigeria, died in a car accident Dec. 13.

Appointed a missionary in 1947, Womack helped establish medical work in Joinkrama, Nigeria. She directed the Kersey Children's Home in Ogbomosh, Nigeria, from 1955 until her retirement in 1987.

She is survived by her sister, Mildred Womack, a Southern Baptist home missionary in Florida.



Ebenezer Church, Tate County, dedicated land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Sam Meacham on Nov. 14. The lot, adjacent to the existing church, will be the site for the new sanctuary. Pictured, from left, are deacons Roy Gillam, Sonny Sowell, Luther Siquiefeld; Eddie Prince, pastor; and Mr. and Mrs. Meacham.



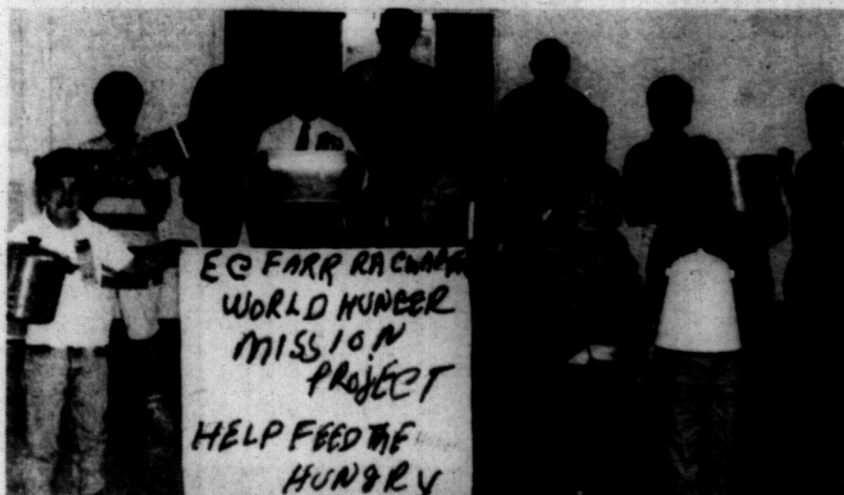
The single adult Sunday School class of Emmanuel Church, Grenada, built and donated a grill to the Green Valley Boys Ranch, Louisville. Time and materials for the construction of the grill were given by Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hayward and Mike Harper. Pictured, from left, are Arvil Putman, Rusty Simmons, Jack Harper, Kay Harper, Jamie Sturgeon, Sue Marlow, Mike Whitzell, and Leslie Melton.



Noxapater Church recently held a recognition service for its GAs and Acteens. Some of the Mission Friends served as crown bearers.



McDowell Road Church, Jackson, recently recognized its Mission Friends, RAs, GAs, and Acteens with a special service. Pictured at top are Mission Friends, GAs, and RAs. Acteens are pictured above.



E.C. Farr RA Chapter of Second Church, Greenville, recently served supper for a mission project and made \$344 for world hunger. Pictured, from left, front row, are Ben Edwards, Allen Sanders, David Edwards; second row, Scott Patter, Steven Taylor, Jeffery Poor, Tim Poor, Andy Edwards, and Chris Holley. Leaders, back row, are Tim Reynolds, Mark Mooney, and James Kerr, RA director.



## Names in the News

First Church, Belzoni, recently honored its pastor, Billy McKay with a Pastor Appreciation Day. Joe Tuten, Jackson, was the guest speaker in the morning services. A recognition service was held during the evening worship. Tommy Taylor, chairman of deacons, McKay presented McKay with a certificate, a gold watch, a week's vacation, and a love gift.



First Faith Church, Batesville, held a reception for John L. Searcy on Nov. 7 in honor of his receiving the doctorate in theology degree from Andersonville Seminary. The reception was also in honor of Searcy's first anniversary as pastor.

Rolling Creek Church, Quitman, held an ordination service for Norman (Little Bud) Robinson. Grady Crowell, director of missions for Clarke Association, brought the charge to the church. Robinson has been called as pastor of Rock Springs Church near Butler, Ala.

## Staff Changes

Robby Myrick has resigned at First Church, Gautier, effective Nov. 28. He has entered full-time evangelism in music and youth work.

Myrick

New Hope Church, Monticello, has called David B. Williams as pastor effective Nov. 13. A native of Brookhaven, Williams is currently a junior at William Carey College, Hattiesburg.

Belle Fountain Church, Ocean Springs, has called Martin S. McDill of New Orleans as part-time minister of youth. A native of Birmingham, Ala., he received his degree at Samford University and expects to graduate from New Orleans in May 1995.

Carmel Church, Monticello, welcomes Mike Leggett as pastor.

He moved to Carmel Church in November from Dinan Church, Waltham Association.

First Church, Kossuth, has called Kevin Wallace as pastor. A native of Pontotoc, he received his education at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Erath, La.



Hardy

Wynndale Church, Terry, has called Bill Hardy as part-time minister of education effective Nov. 21. He received his education at Mississippi College and Southwestern Seminary. He previously worked in the Wyoming Baptist Convention. He is retired and part-time consultant in Partnership Missions, MBCB. Charles Gentry is pastor of Wynndale Church.

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BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9

## Baptist student directors plan for evangelism involvement in 1995

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (BP) — State student directors meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Dec. 2-5, launched plans for student participation in the 1995 "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now." evangelism emphasis.

The directors, attending annual planning meetings sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's national student ministry, received a planbook to guide student involvement in the program through witness training, personal soul-winning, special evangelistic events and other opportunities. Several options for involvement are included, such as plans for "60 in 60," a program to encourage college students to share Christ with 60 of their peers in 60 days, and "1-2-1," a relational evangelism

program which encourages students to cultivate a relationship with and witness to a non-Christian friend.

The planbook, which will be mailed to campus directors, was developed by the National Evangelism Task Force (NET Force) in cooperation with NSM and the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board.

"We want every college student in America to have the opportunity to hear the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior," Charles Johnson, NSM director, said.

At the meeting, state student directors also were updated on plans for "Mission 95," a nationwide missions conference scheduled for Dec. 27-31, 1994, at the

Commonwealth Convention Center in Louisville, Ky.

"That All Peoples Might Sing His Praises" is the theme for the event, which is expected to attract up to 5,000 college students, high school seniors, directors of Baptist student ministry, church ministers to college students, college Sunday School teachers, pastors and missionaries.

During their annual planning meetings, state student directors learned that BSUs across the country had donated more than \$120,000 in 1993 to support student work in newer convention areas as part of the "East-West Challenge." The program currently focuses on supporting work in Boston, Chicago, and the state of California.

### Leading youths to Christ —

## Plan of salvation altered to present truths in Scripture to young people

When presenting the gospel to youths, use these truths and their Scriptures:

1. God loves you. God loves all people and desires them to have eternal life (John 3:16; 10:10).

2. You are a sinner in need of forgiveness. You have sinned by choosing to go your own way instead of God's way. Through his Holy Spirit, God wants you to know that you are separated from God and will face his judgment (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Heb. 9:27).

3. God wants to forgive you. God has demonstrated his love for you by sending you his Son, Jesus Christ; by dying on the cross and rising from the dead, Jesus took your judgment and made it possible for you to be forgiven (Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:18).

4. You must turn away from your sins. You cannot save yourself or earn God's forgiveness as a result of being good enough. Just as you change directions when you realize you are walking the wrong way, you must repent, or turn away, from your sins (Luke 13:5; Eph. 2:8-9).

5. You must place your faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ. When you realize you are walking in the wrong direction, you turn to find the right way. Jesus is the right way. As you turn away from your sins, place your faith in Jesus to receive forgiveness and eternal life (Acts 20:21; John 14:6).

6. You can receive Jesus Christ through prayer. Because Jesus is alive, he stands ready to come into your life (Rev. 3:20). Through prayer, you can:

A-dmit to God that you are a sinner and that you are turning from your sins;

B-elieve in Jesus by thanking him for dying on the cross and rising from the dead for your sins;

C-omit your life to Jesus by asking him to come into your life as your Lord and Savior.

At this point, ask the youth if there is any good reason why he or she could not pray to receive Jesus. Encourage the youth to pray aloud to turn from sin and to receive Christ.

Accepting Christ is the beginning. Urge the youth to follow Christ in baptism and to unite with

a church. Encourage the youth to be faithful in a daily quiet time, Sunday School, and worship at church.

Through love and prayer, you can lead youths to Christ. Look for opportunities to present the gospel.

— Reprinted from YOUTH IN ACTION, Baptist Sunday School Board, 1992.

## Former pastor W.P. Claxton dies at age 86

William Perry Claxton, 86, pastor of First Church in Greenville until his retirement in 1972, died of heart failure Dec. 18. Services were held Dec. 20 at First Church, Greenville.

Claxton, a Georgia native, graduated from Alabama Military Institute in Anniston, Ala., Howard College (Samford University), and Southwestern Seminary.

Among his various positions in the denomination he served as a teacher at Mississippi Baptist Seminary, moderator for Washington County Association, associate member of the Holding Board-West Central Delta Center-Mississippi Baptist Seminary, and a member of the executive board and administration committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Survivors include: wife, Mary; daughters Nancy Riddle and Billie Edwards, both of Greenville; son, William Claxton of Clinton; two sisters, six grandsons, and seven great-grandchildren.



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# Decline in baptisms pondered by evangelism leaders

By Sarah Zimmerman

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (BP) — Confronted with two consecutive years of decreased baptisms, Southern Baptist evangelism leaders called for intentional soul winning to be every church's priority.

The estimated number of baptisms for 1993 is 350,000, down 5% from 367,000 baptisms in 1992. Steve Whitten, director of the Home Mission Board's Program Research Department, presented the statistics during a Dec. 2-5 meeting of state evangelism directors in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"My heart is deeply burdened, grieved, and broken because of what (the estimate) reflects," said Darrell Robinson, Home Mission Board vice president for evangelism. "It is indicative of a desperate need for revival."

The two years of decline follow four years of increased baptisms which peaked at 397,000 in 1991.

Evangelism must be relational and intentional yet confrontational, said John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist

Convention. He said Southern Baptists must deliberately reach out to others, even people who seem religious, such as members of cults. But he said Christians can't evangelize without confronting people with their need to repent.

Terms such as target audience, niche marketing, homogeneous churches, and user-friendly churches indicate Southern Baptists are in danger of developing a theology of exclusion, Sullivan said. Rather than market the church, he said, "We ought to church the market."

Larry Lewis,

Home Mission Board president, offered five suggestions to increase baptisms:

1) Start satellite units. Lewis recommended the "key church" concept as a model for churches to

use to start other congregations. First Church of Dallas reported more than 900 baptisms in 1992, Lewis noted, and more than 600 of those were from its 31 off-campus congregations.

2) Soul-winning modeled by leaders. Lewis cited Ed Young, pastor of Second Church, Houston, and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, as an example because of Young's commitment to spend two nights a week in evangelistic visitation.

3) Learn from

other denominations and parachurch groups reporting increases in professions of faith.

4) Have a major evangelistic thrust every year. Southern Baptists sponsored simultaneous revivals in 1991, the last year Southern Baptists reported an increase in baptisms. Another simultaneous evangelistic effort is scheduled for 1995.

5) Use Sunday School as the major outreach force in the local church. Since nearly every church has Sunday School, it is counterproductive to create an evangelistic focus that circumvents Sunday School, Lewis said.

Other suggestions from state evangelism directors were to:

— Follow-up on prospects discovered through ministry projects.

— Increase preaching and teaching on baptism.

— Provide specialized assistance for churches that report no baptisms.

— Conduct "celebration baptism services" away from the church building.

Zimmerman writes for HMB.

## 6,001 churches baptized no one last year

A study of 1992 baptisms in Southern Baptist churches shows 6,001 churches baptized no one, while less than 3% of the churches accounted for nearly 24% of the baptisms.

Other figures from the report include:

— Half the churches reporting no baptisms had fewer than 100 members, yet 18% of the churches with no baptisms had 200 or more members.

— Most churches reporting no baptisms are rural, although 14% of the churches without baptisms are in communities of 10,000 or more.

— Churches reporting no baptisms are typically older than churches with baptisms. The average age of churches reporting no baptisms was 70 years.

— Churches baptizing no one were 16.5% of all Southern Baptist churches. Churches which baptized two to four people were 30.7% of all churches.

— There were 910 churches with at least 50 baptisms; 239 churches with 100 or more.

— Ninety-seven percent of churches reporting 100 or more baptisms had at least 500 members; 87% had at least 1,000 members.

— Almost half the churches, 47.2%, accounted for 7% of the baptisms.

— 360 churches in Mississippi baptized no one last year, while only seven Mississippi churches baptized over 100 people each.

# Criswell offers pithy management advice to Tupelo audience

By Tim Nicholas

W.A. Criswell, senior pastor among Southern Baptists, visited Mississippi Dec. 6 offering his ideas on how to be a good pastor. He also noted a couple of things over which he has changed his mind.

Beginning several of his statements with, "You may not agree with me but..." Criswell spoke for two hours to pastors and guests at East Heights Church, Tupelo.

He told the group of about 30 that, "The man of God who is the pastor of the church is the ruler," noting that the book of Hebrews says three times to obey those that have rule over you. "They can quarrel with God over that, not me," he said.

He said that when he went to be pastor of First Church, Dallas, nearly 50 years ago, he told church leaders: "The pulpit is mine and I preach what God puts on my mind, and the staff is mine and I run that church."

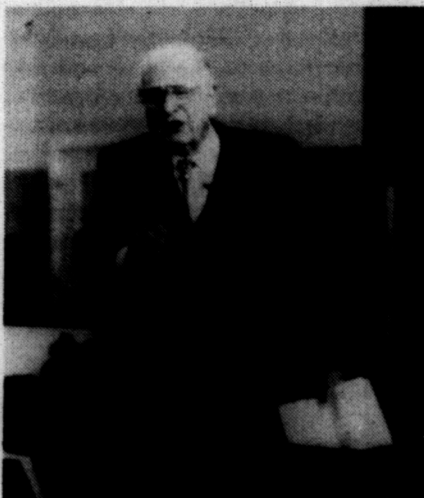
He added, "Remember, this is my idea of the pastoral role. If you have a dynamic pastor guiding the destiny of that church, you'll have a godly church." He said if a church has "a wimp" who lets others dictate what he can preach, it will be "a slovenly and sorry and poor church."

Criswell said the size of a church depends on the size of the staff. "You can only put your arms around so many people," he said, comparing the church to a tree. In the middle is the pastor and his family. "You don't grow at the center, you grow at the periphery." He said at the height of First Church, Dallas, they had a paid staff of 344 people.

Criswell said a church needs choirs "plural," he said. "Be sensitive to the comfort of the people

and don't be afraid to change." He said when he was a country preacher, they would have month-long revival services in a tabernacle by the church. Now, he said, he doesn't attempt to have revivals. One can do the work through the Sunday School, visitation, and bringing the lost to the house of the Lord.

He said he doesn't care how devout we are or how much is given to the Lottie Moon Christmas



W.A. Criswell

Offering for Foreign Missions, "We will never send out enough missionaries."

He said to enlist every family member at budget time. Everyone fills out a pledge card, he said. "Pin it on the diaper" of the baby, he said, and allow people to designate through the church to whatever worthy cause they like. It will keep them giving and he said that likely they'll stop designating and continue giving.

Besides dropping revival services, Criswell talked of other changes in the way he does things. For instance, he said at one time he

would not perform a wedding ceremony for divorced persons. Reading an article in a secular magazine initiated his change. It dealt with other types of adultery. He said he knew a woman who came to church black and blue.

"All kinds of things destroy the family... thousands are better off when they break it up," he said it is a personal conviction that, after counseling, he will marry divorced persons.

He said that his understanding of suicide has changed. "I have talked to pastors who think they (suicides) are automatically damned in hell fire. I came to a heavenly understanding and explanation," he said, noting that a person can be sick in the mind just as in the body.

"Does God damn us because we're sick?" he asked. Instead, he said, he asks God's blessing of remembrance and compassionate memory.

Other Criswellian advice:

Counseling: "Don't talk to a woman about the intimacies of her life."

Baptism: "Dr. Truett [his predecessor at Dallas] slam-dunked people. But baptism is a burial service and I never saw anybody fling their dead into the ground."

Instead, he said to do it gently and make a witness out of the act. "...If one is to be baptized, talk to (witness to) the whole family."

The denomination: "The Cooperative Program was born in my lifetime. That does not mean you cannot support missionaries of your love and choice. We have 31 chapels. We tried to get those ethnic groups to our church, but they wouldn't come. We're organizing the 32nd one (soon)."

The SBC: "We have won our attempt to turn the SBC back to the Bible, to its conservative nature.... The dichotomies lie in our state conventions. In Texas the conservatives tried to take over. But the convention is entirely in the hands of Baylor University.... You've got the same thing in this state. Practically all the states are in the hands of the liberals. God help us."

Criswell absolutely, positively affirmed the pastoral preaching role. "You're going to stand up there and call them out of the judg-

ment that faces every soul. You'll call them out of Sodom and Gomorrah."

Nicholas is director, Office of Communication, MBCB.

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## Uniform Mission to people



By Doug Bain  
Luke 4

From the passage in Luke 4 comes insight into Jesus' move into his formal ministry. A major truth that may be present for 20th-century believers is about our moving toward a "Mission to People." As responsive hearers see how Jesus began his mature ministry with a definite mission, the truth emerges that Christians are those in whom Christ takes that same shape today. The body of Christians is the body of Christ — an extension of his kind of mission to people. One of the dynamics that arises in a close reading of the text is that there is no obedience, discipleship, or mission without radical risk.

Jesus' homecoming to Nazareth (v. 16). Having identified with John the Baptizer's reform effort, having experienced acceptance by the Father, having come to terms with "the form of a servant" (3:21-22, 4:1-13), Jesus now launches into a servant-shaped ministry. Strangely enough, he embarks on his life mission right in his own backyard! Risky business — this kind of beginning at home — as reflected in such local comments as "Is not this Joseph's son?" Translated — "Who does he think he is? He is no different than we are."

On the Saturday Sabbath Jesus went as usual to the synagogue. The importance of "consistent worship with God's people" may well be a truth in this passage. But equally true is the importance and calculated risk of beginning Christian witness in "hometown territory."

Jesus establishes his identity (vv. 17-20). Using a Servant Song from Isaiah 61 to interpret his life's work, Jesus addresses the local synagogue. And he forever shatters our expectations! His agenda is not to focus on the religious elite, not even the affluent lost sheep. His trajectory is aimed toward the downcast. He breaks precedent. "How can he possibly be 'religious' and chart such a course, touching contaminated lives, those ritually unclean! This was not the kind of Messiah our kind of folks expect, or expect to follow."

Jesus not only tampered with their Scriptures. Reinterpreting them, he tampered with their expectations. And for this he would be ushered out with hostility (v. 29). "You may have grown up around here, and we appreciate the sermon effort, but we do not need that kind of teaching. We like our arrangement as it is."

Christians need to adopt the challenge of servant ministry to those who suffer, who are broken, in poverty, and enslaved. But hear and beware! Discipleship, mission, outreach, and obedience that pattern after this Jesus, taking his kind of risk, likewise risk the backlash from shattered religious expectations. It may be that we need less rhetoric about Jesus and more following. As Clarence Jordan told his brother, "You may need to go back and tell that preacher you just want to admire Jesus — not follow him."

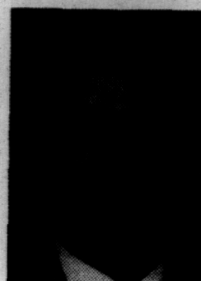
Jesus' message (vv. 21-28). Once again, the account discloses his courage to venture, involving the risk of running counter to the unofficial establishment creed. "This day, the kingdom is dawning," he had suggested. But they could see that Rome still controlled the borders and the economy. And what was worse, he indicated that foreigners sometimes knew God's help when Israel did not (vv. 26-27). Was he suggesting that his outreach would include Gentiles and exclude no one? How revolutionary and radical can one get? What kind of religious Messiah is he, reaching out to sinner folk and even Gentiles?

The amen crowd turned strangely silent before they broke into outright hostility. And Jesus was terminated from the synagogue pulpit, and apparently never went "home" again, without honor or a hearing in his own "country."

God's suffering servants who follow the Suffering Servant minister to all people, not a select few. All are "elect." None are excluded. But the careful student will not fail to discern that while obedience to Jesus certainly brings joy, — joy is often in counterpoint relationship with suffering and rejection. Journeying into this new year can be an opportunity to renew a sense of mission to people and to accept the risk of a servant-shaped mission to all people.

Bain is professor of biblical and related studies, Blue Mountain College.

## Bible Book Jesus: The eternal Word



By Dan Howard  
John 1

My father has shared with me that when he was a young man, a person's word was as good as the written contracts and agreements we sign today. In some cases, a man's word back then was better. No longer is just our word sufficient to secure a loan or to accomplish other business transactions. Jesus is "The Word" we can depend upon and in whom we can find eternal security for our lives.

The Word's identity with God (vv. 1-2). John, the apostle, begins his gospel by stating that Jesus existed before the dawn of creation. "In the beginning" refers to the existence of Christ in eternity and refers to God's creative activity in Genesis 1:1.

The concept of "the Word" was something the Greeks and Jews understood. "The Word" in Greek is *logos*, and means "the given, spoken manifestation or revelation of the speaker." God had a word to say to mankind. He sought to communicate this message in a personal way through his Son.

John goes on to say "the Word was with God." The idea is that the Word always was with God. The phrase "with God" is the picture of two people looking at one another on the same level. They do not have to look up or down in order to be eye to eye with each other. This states that there was equality between God and the Word. John also states that "the Word was God." John states that Jesus was divine in response to the gnostic view that said he was not divine.

The Word's relationship to creation (vv. 3-5). It was through the spoken word of God that this universe was created. God is the source of both physical and spiritual life. The word John uses for life refers to spiritual life or salvation.

The Word was also the Light. By his life the Word sought to dispel the darkness and show mankind the true way to eternal life. The meaning of the word "comprehend" (v. 5) is that of overpowering or overcoming. The darkness will never be able to overpower the Light. What a statement of comfort and assurance for all Christians.

John the Baptist's witness concerning the Word (vv. 6-8). A witness is someone who testifies to what he knows and understands to be the truth. John stated that there was a man appointed by God who was a witness to the Light. He was not the Light. He was to prepare the way for the Light. This man's name was John the Baptist.

The Word in the world (vv. 9-14). The Creator of the world entered the world but the ones whom he had created refused to acknowledge him. We have free will and can choose to accept or reject the Word. For those who choose to accept Jesus as their Savior, the Lord gives them the right to become his children. Verse 13 is very clear that we do not become children of God by being born into Christian homes or because of a desire or through the desires of our parents. The source of salvation is God.

In an effort to reveal himself more fully to us "the Word became flesh." God became human. The Word "dwelt" means "he pitched his tent" or "he tabernacled" with us.

The Word's revelation of God (vv. 15-18). A person's lifestyle reveals something about what the person believes and helps us to understand the true nature of that person. Jesus' lifestyle and words revealed who he was.

John the Baptist acknowledged that Jesus was superior to him. He also stated in verse 16 that those who have accepted him as Savior have received his very nature. We have not received part of Jesus, but all of him.

John reminds us that the law was given through Moses. When God wanted to reveal grace and truth, he came himself. The fact that the Son is in the bosom of the Father indicates the close, intimate relationship between the Father and Son. Because Jesus, "the Word," was God, he has made known fully his character, love, and purpose. Jesus is "the eternal Word."

Howard is pastor of Woodville Church, Woodville.

## Life and Work Can Jesus Christ help?



By Billie Buckley  
Luke 4

I have invited a three-year-old to help me teach this Sunday School lesson about Jesus. Her story is simple. It begins one Sunday as her family was returning home from church. She announced to her mother, "I love to sing, 'Oh, How I Love Jesus.'"

"I like that song, too," her mother answered.

"Do you know what I'm gonna do?" asked the little girl.

"No. What?"

"One day, I'm gonna sit on Jesus' lap and sing it to him."

"What are you going to sing?"

"I'm gonna sing, 'Oh, How I Love You, Jesus.'"

Isn't that wonderful! She wasn't over-impressed or in love with preaching or programs or performances as some grown-ups are. She actually moved to the heart of the Scripture found in Luke 4. Jesus helps us.

We can find the answer to four questions in our Bible study: Why, when, who, and how much can he help?

Why can he help (vv. 17-21)? Here we find God's original purpose in sending Jesus. It was to obey God. Jesus lived to obey his Father. He obeyed God the Father by meeting the needs of all mankind.

What qualifies him for this responsibility? The answer is found in verse 18, a quote from the messianic prophecy of Isaiah.

"He anointed me." Jesus was appointed by God, and this certainly qualifies him to meet all our needs. He is qualified, and he is able.

"... He has sent me." His acceptance by God as a sent substitute for our sins more than qualifies him to fully take care of us. His knowledge of what is appropriate for our needs is complete.

When can he help (vv. 22-24)? This Scripture points out to us the necessity of an adequate response to Jesus. Only as we give him permission to meet our needs can he help us. There are only two types of responses: inadequate and adequate.

The people in this story were wishy-washy. They spoke well of Jesus and then they became furious at him. This wishy-washy response was not adequate then, nor is it adequate today.

Oswald Chambers wrote: "God loves a man who needs him." This is the only adequate response to make. It is when we say, "I need you, Father. Here is my do-it-yourself kit. I've tried to fix my life by myself, but I can't. It doesn't work."

Who can he help (v. 40)? Here we find an example of Jesus meeting needs in the Bible. The question today is: Who else can he help?

We are told in this verse that "when the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of illnesses." All may still come to him today.

A true Southerner would say that they "toted" them to Jesus. Have we who are well been "toters" for those who need some form of help? It could be that someone you know needs to be toted to Jesus for a cure of loneliness, or guilt, or faithfulness, or grief, or bitterness, or hopelessness.

If you read on, you will find in verse 42 that "at day-break Jesus went out to a solitary place." I don't know about you, but solitary places are hard for me to find. Yet, if we are to follow his example there must be those quiet times when we can get alone to experience God.

How much can he help (vv. 43-44)? The extent of God's purpose in sending Jesus is found in these verses. No one has a monopoly on Jesus' caring, for in verse 43 he said, "I must preach in other places, also." He is unlimited.

He can care as much as is needed, in as many situations as are needed, in various locations, and to all who are in need.

On one hand, never forget the great privilege we have to hear the gospel preached in the place where we live. On the other hand, never forget the other places that need to know the answer to all the questions of this lesson and of this life.

The answer is Jesus. Could we join in one voice singing to him today: "Oh, how I love you. Oh, how I love you. Oh, how I love you, Jesus, because you first loved me."

Buckley is a member of Petal Harvey Church, Petal.



# capsules

**TEXAS BAPTISTS, CAMPUS CRUSADE BRING 'JESUS' FILM TO KURDS:** DALLAS (BP) — Texas Baptists teamed up with Campus Crusade for Christ to deliver a Christmas gift for up to 35 million Kurds in the Middle East — a dramatic portrayal of Jesus' life presented in their own language. During the last two weeks in December, a Kurdish-language version of the "Jesus" film translated by a Kurdish Southern Baptist from Dallas was broadcast on five television stations in the neutral zone of Iraq. Baptist involvement in the project began when Bob Dixon, executive director of the Texas Baptist Men, received a phone call from a Campus Crusade representative. Leaders of the parachurch organization were aware of the emergency relief Texas Baptists provided to Kurdish refugees in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. They wanted to know if Dixon knew anyone who could translate their "Jesus" film into the dominant Kurdish dialect. Dixon contacted Hashim Sushi, who had served as interpreter of Kurdish language and culture for TBM during the relief ministries. Sushi — a Muslim by birth who had been investigating Christianity — had joined Midway Road Church, Dallas as a result of his contact with Dixon. Sushi worked more than nine months translating the "Jesus" film into the written Kurdish language and interpreting it into the Karmangi dialect. After a commissioning service at Midway Road Church Dec. 12, Sushi left Dec. 15 for Dihou, Iraq, where he will teach at a Christian high school.

**SWINDOLL ANNOUNCES MOVE TO NASHVILLE:** NASHVILLE (BP) — Popular author and speaker Charles R. Swindoll has resigned the pastorate of the First Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, Calif., effective April 15, 1994, and announced plans to move to the Nashville area. Swindoll, 59, who will become president of Dallas Theological Seminary on June 30, 1994, said he "eventually" plans to move to the suburban Nashville area of Brentwood and Franklin but did not specify a date. Stating his "firm commitment" to the seminary, he said after new directions there are established, he hopes to begin a non-denominational church near Nashville. While plans are indefinite, Swindoll said he hopes at some point to move his radio ministry, "Insight for Living," to the Nashville area.

## Newest in Books

**A HISTORY OF GOD,** by Karen Armstrong. Explores the ways in which the idea and experience of God evolved among the monotheists — Jews, Christians, and Muslims. (Alfred A. Knopf, 460 pages.)

**PEACE OR ARMAGEDDON?** by Dan O'Neill and Don Wagner. The unfolding drama of the Middle East peace accord. (Zondervan, 112 pages.)

**MY SACRIFICE HIS FIRE,** by Anne Ortlund. Words of deep insight and truth set in weekday reading for women. (Word, 285 pages.)

**BIND US TOGETHER — THE CHURCH AND OLDER MEMBERS,** by Pat H. Gullledge. How to bless and be blessed by senior church members. (Dallas Printing, 89 pages. Books can be ordered from Pat H. Gullledge, Box 5006, Grenada, MS 38901.)

**STARTING A SEEKER SENSITIVE SERVICE,** by Ed Dobson. How traditional churches can reach the unchurched. (Zondervan, 157 pages.)

**CHERITH, A BOOK OF POEMS,** by Rex Pickens. A source of spiritual food and water enabling those who read it to gain strength to venture forth for God. (Brentwood Christian Press, 92 pages. Books can be ordered from First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 178, Saltillo, MS 38866, cost \$10 each, plus \$1.44 postage.)

**ANGELS AMONG US,** by Don Fearheiley. Amazing true stories of ordinary people helped by extraordinary beings. (Avon paperback.)

**IN THE LAND WHERE TIME BEGAN,** by Marion Prather Hays. Warm and witty sketches of Old Testament characters. (117 pages, Smith & Helwys.)

### Bibliocipher

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WUUK NBMCGUYHUG ET DFU YBHU BA PBX,  
YBBWETP ABC DFU VUCLN BA BMC YBCX RUGMG  
LFCEGD MTDB UDUCTZY YEAU.

RMXU DJUTDN-BTU

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Nine: Twenty-Nine.

## Just for seniors —

# Make every day count

Following is the third in a series of articles on senior adults written by Robert J. Hastings, retired editor of the *Illinois Baptist*, newsjournal of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

More than 37,000 Americans now living have noted their 100th birthdays. And you thought you were getting old?

At age 93, Norman Vincent Peale shared his thoughts about aging in a new book, *The Ageless Spirit* (Berman and Goldman). Peale, who with his wife, Ruth, co-founded *Guideposts* magazine, claims if you say, "Now I'm retired and I'm an old man," your mind will accept what you say about yourself. And in truth, you become "an old man."

The late Frank Bering gave Peale some valuable advice:

"Live your life and forget your age." After all the times our parents warned us while growing up to "act your age," are we now to forget our age? Yes, because toward the end of life there's no more time to "act," only time to "live."

In a recent issue of *Modern Maturity* magazine, Malcolm Boyd quotes a reader burdened by anxiety over getting old, an anxiety that speeds up her heartbeat and causes her to hyperventilate. Boyd replied by citing his own fears when he reached only 50. To look younger, he changed his appearance. But when he looked in the mirror, he saw a stranger! At that moment he made the decision to be himself, including his age.

Recently I saw a television ad for an "age-denial" face cream.

Presumably, it's for a person of any age who wishes to deny how old he or she is.

Now I believe in looking our best, because the person who enjoys being sloppy and unkempt may have poor self-esteem. But there's a difference in looking one's best and trying to look like an 18-year-old.

It's poor psychology for anyone to practice "age-denial," whether he's 7 or 70. One proof of maturity is the ability to accept and make friends with one's self.

And that's exactly what Frank Bering meant when he advised Peale to "forget your age and live your life."

Yes, there's more to life than counting birthdays. And I'll tell you what it is:

"Make every day count!"

## Lottie Moon —

# "Big" missions offering comes from the heart of Clinton boy

By Marjean Patterson

Cole Brabham has heard a lot about the Foreign Mission Week of Prayer and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this year because of his mother.

Cheryl Brabham is the primary person in the WMU office to receive and fill orders for posters, offering envelopes, and prayer guides to be used in Mississippi churches for the special foreign mission emphasis.

Cole, usually places \$1 per week in the offering plate at his church, Parkway in Jackson. On a recent Sunday morning, Cole heard his church WMU director

share with the congregation about foreign mission needs. After she had finished speaking, Cole said to his mother, "I'm going to have to be saying goodbye to one of my \$20 bills, because they are going to be needing some BIG money to take care of everything!"

A week passed, and Cole had time to think about his \$20 bill — so close to Christmas, so many things a seven-year-old boy would like to find under the Christmas tree. But he never mentioned the possibility of giving less to the Lottie Moon

Offering that he had been impressed to pledge the previous Sunday. The source of his offering was birthday money, plus some gifts for helping with chores around the house, so it really was HIS money.

When the offering plate was passed the Sunday morning, he gladly placed in it the envelope with his "big money."

A member of Mission Friends during his preschool years, and now a member of Royal Ambassadors, who knows how much of a heart for missions he will grow up having, thanks to faithful church leaders and family leaders who have helped him to know that it truly is "more blessed to give than to receive."

Patterson is executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union.



Cole Brabham, 7, and his mother Cheryl live in Clinton and are members of Parkway Church, Jackson.

Baptist Record

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